



Afro-Mexican History: Trends and Directions in Scholarship*

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Abstract

This article surveys the development of a relatively new and vibrant subfield in Latin American History, mapping out the major stages of its evolution and signaling key intellectual debates. While much of the scholarship on Afro-Mexican history has been produced in the last thirty-five years, this article aims to contextualize these writings within a broader historical framework. This process shows more clearly the various independent and interdependent tracks that exist within the study of Mexico's black population.

Until very recently, the study of Mexico's black population could not be categorized as forming any particular school of thought or intellectual inquiry. The impressionistic nature of the writings on blacks, which persisted even well into the 20th century, frequently worked to subordinate Afro-Mexican history to broader themes, such as nationalism, the economy, regional development, and general social conditions. Nevertheless, it is still possible to outline the evolution of historical scholarship on blacks in Mexico, extending back into the colonial period. What we discover is that in many ways, the discussion of blacks has followed the trajectory of the political development of the nation. Writings on Afro-Mexicans can be grouped into periods that correspond to (1) Mexico's colonial and independence era (1521–1821); (2) the pre-revolutionary period (1822–1910); and (3) the post-revolutionary period (1921 to current). Within these periods there is much nuance to account for, but by and large, they provide useful markers by which to evaluate the progression of the intellectual conversation on Mexico's blackness.

In the colonial period, outside of the abundant ecclesiastical and government documentation that can still be found in the colonial archives, very few published works concentrated directly upon blacks. What survives comes mainly in three forms: traveler's accounts, narrative accounts of the Conquest of Mexico, and political treatises. In terms of travelogues, the narratives of men such as Thomas Gage, Juan F. Gemelli Carreri, Fray Francisco de Ajofrín, and Alexander von Humbolt are revealing for the patterns of discourse that they uncover.¹ By and large, their writings depict

mulattos, *pardos*,² and *negros* in a negative light, to the extent that they cite these populations as bearing a corrupting influence on the social development of the colonies. Meanwhile, the accounts of the Conquest, frequently referred to as the “chronicles,” represent a different, although related genre. More historically grounded, the writings of men such as Francisco López de Gomara (c. 1552), Bernal Díaz del Castillo (c. 1562), and Fray Diego Durán (c. 1580) make reference to the black military auxiliaries who accompanied the Spanish conquistadors. As can be imagined, blacks appear as ornaments to the main story, or as scapegoats and anti-heroes that complemented the dominant Spanish presence.³ Finally, in colonial political treatises, blacks make equally brief appearances in works discussing social conditions, military organization, and municipal control. Perhaps more than in the other types of texts however, the Afro-Mexican population appears less of a novelty, being discussed as an embedded element of colonial life. It is here where we find blacks becoming more tightly associated with the colony’s amorphous “plebeian” class.⁴

During the pre-revolutionary period (1822–1910), a reassessment was made regarding the worth of blacks to the emerging national narrative. How would the young nation create a coherent citizenry out of the various populations inhabiting Mexico’s disparate regions? The answer would elude the country for most of the 19th century as Mexico plunged deep into civil unrest. Out of it all, however, race and ethnicity emerged as important points of debate, as the nation experimented with social philosophies such as positivism to help chart a course for successful nationhood. Consequently, blacks began appearing in historical writings in more central ways. Some intellectuals discovered a certain freedom in being able to appropriate the black image in ways that furthered their political agendas. The writings of Vicente Riva Palacio provide a good example. One of the central figures behind the popularization of a literary genre known as the “historical novel,” Riva Palacio’s archival research brought to life the struggles of black runaway slaves, as well as free-blacks who pushed for rights in colonial society. Through stories such as those found in *El libro rojo* and *Los treinta y tres negros*, the plight of these blacks served as a didactic tool, helping the Mexican readership of the mid-19th century confront issues of their own oppression at the hands of foreign powers (France and the United States).⁵ These stories also helped Mexicans better understand the intricacies of homegrown class inequity. Embedded distantly in the secure comfort of the early colonial period, the experience of blacks, as recounted by Riva Palacio, offered poignant social commentary in ways that felt safe to a divided nation. Moreover, because blacks were viewed ambivalently, both as a part and not a part of the nation, their experiences possessed an added voyeuristic effect.

The pre-revolutionary era also produced a very different type of writing. On the pages of Mexico’s newspapers and journals, articles inspired by pseudo-scientific and social Darwinist theories debated the worth of blacks to the nation. For some, the supposedly detrimental physical qualities of

blacks were construed as unhealthy for progress, but for others blacks were heralded as the possible answer to some of Mexico's economic woes. Especially in backwater regions where the climate was deemed too inhospitable for attracting coveted white immigrants, foreign blacks were encouraged to settle as colonists. Some believed that through their labor they might be able to perform the same economic miracles that they did for the U.S. South, or for Cuba's sugar plantations. As intellectuals argued over black "worth," they substantiated some of their claims with history.⁶

Debates about the worth of blacks took a slightly different course in the context of the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, the cultural landscape produced by this seminal event had a lasting effect on Afro-Mexican historiography. After the revolution, Mexico placed a heightened emphasis on the hybrid nature of its population to demonstrate the strength of its national character. But a certain type of hybrid phenotype was praised – the *mestizo*, or mixture of white and Indian.⁷ Blacks were literally written out of the national narrative. Excluding blacks from the national image was a process that was long in the making, but arguably, it was in the 1920s when the process had some of its strongest influences.

Regardless, a number of key historical works appeared that continued to valorize, or at least mention blacks. Alfonso Toro was among those who postulated that in order to better understand the temperament of the Mexican citizenry, one needed a better grasp of the long-term contributions of Afro-Mexicans. Citing the writings of colonial missionaries, as well as episodes of slave rebellion and resistance, Toro recounted that the black population had been extremely bellicose in New Spain. As blacks became assimilated into the general population, he believed that they slowly transmitted their belligerent behavioral qualities into the character of the broader citizen body. As a result, the Mexican people's propensity for revolt, which had been witnessed during the Mexican Revolution, the struggle for independence, and the tumultuous 19th century, could be partly credited to the nation's Afro-Mexican heritage.⁸

While a string of books and articles were written in the 1920s and 30s on Afro-Mexicans, it was in the 1940s when the so-called birth of Afro-Mexican historical studies began. The credit is usually given to the work of, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, whose *La población negra de México* (1946) has become the cornerstone of the field.⁹ Having been trained by Melville Herskovits at Northwestern, Aguirre Beltrán's book was the first to systematically employ a methodology for examining the African roots of Mexico's population. His book also offered a sweeping demographic analysis of the colonial black population, stressing the extent to which blacks could be found throughout New Spain. One of the book's main arguments took cue from the Mexican Revolution. As revisionist as it was in giving space to Afro-Mexicans in the nation's history, *La población negra* emphasized assimilation and hybridity, noting that the colonial Mexican caste system and its abolition during the Independence era created superb circumstances for racial mixture. Apart

from a few isolated regional pockets, Aguirre Beltrán wrote that Afro-Mexicans had eagerly and spontaneously blended into the broader national population by the early years of Independence.

It is important to stress that Aguirre Beltrán's work, while pioneering, was not written in isolation. German Latorre (1920) had already started the demographic work that proved foundational to the writings of Aguirre Beltrán. Carlos Basauri's (1943) ethnographic study of Mexico's black populations proved influential to Aguirre Beltrán's later writings. Lastly, Aguirre Beltrán's decision to study Afro-Mexicans was not an idea he conceived of himself. Rather, he appears to have been prodded into the project upon the suggestion of Manuel Gamio, one of the leading intellectual figures of Mexico's Revolutionary period.¹⁰

The era of scholarship on Afro-Mexicans that stretched through the 1940s, 50s, and early 60s can be categorized as one of gradual internationalization, as more scholars from outside of Mexico began paying closer attention the Mexican case. Aguirre Beltrán's study came at a particularly opportune time in this regard. It was published during the same year as Frank Tannenbaum's *Slave and Citizen* (1946), which opened a series of debates that launched the comparative slavery school.¹¹ Through an increasingly internationalized understanding of slave systems, scholars began trying to uncover the roots of the "Negro problem" that had so beleaguered the United States, but which seemed largely resolved in Latin American societies. Tannenbaum's thesis that Latin American slavery was qualitatively different than in North America and the British colonies sent scores of scholars scurrying to prove (or disprove) his points. Aguirre Beltrán's book, although engaged in conversation with a different historiography, emerged in the context of the Tannenbaum debate as an important tome on Mexican slavery and Latin American race relations, offering some support to the idealized, benign portrait of Latin American slave systems. The book was positioned alongside other important classics that were written by nationalistically oriented scholars who sought to affirm Latin American race mixture, such as Gilberto Freyre in Brazil, and to a lesser extent Fernando Ortiz in Cuba.¹² The ramifications of these early investigations into the condition of race within individual Latin American countries have been wide reaching, particularly in the past few decades, as the African Diaspora research paradigm has been affecting worldwide scholarship on the black presence. While falling outside the scope of this article, it is important to note that alongside the slow creation of the Afro-Mexican historical subfield, parallel developments took place in areas such as Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, among others.¹³ Although each of these historiographies on Afro-Latin Americans enjoys an independent track, they are interdependently related, and scholars working in one area feed off the research advances of each other. International conferences and events, such as annual workshops held by the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD), UNESCO's Tracking the Slave Route Project,

and Harvard's Atlantic History Seminar have provided active forums for maintaining fertile scholarly dialogue. The next step which this emerging, nationally bounded literature may take is to embark upon grand synthesis, as signaled earlier in a seminal article written by the late Frederick Bowser in 1972.¹⁴

Returning to Mexico, the late 1950s and early 60s witnessed another important development in Latin American historiography that impacted Mexico. Inquiries into the hierarchical structure of colonial society generated great interest in the Mexican caste system. A new generation of scholars began to wonder if the impact of class differences in the colonial period outweighed the power of race/caste and estate structures in the articulation of social relations. The questions generated the caste vs. class debate, whose rich historiography has contributed greatly to our understanding of black colonial life.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the 1950s and 60s were witness to key international movements, specifically the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. and the de-colonization efforts in Africa, which elevated the profile of scholarship on blacks. In the scholarly realm, Phillip Curtin's *The Slave Trade, A Census* (1969), re-invigorated the field of comparative slavery by offering a panoramic overview of slave demography.¹⁶ To test his numbers, scholars began the hard work of advancing case studies, of which Mexico became a part.

Among the better known works that came as a result of the early internationalization of Afro-Mexican history are the books and articles written by Patrick Carroll, Colin Palmer, Peter Boyd-Bowman, Edgar Love, David Davidson, Robert Brady, and William H. Dusenberry.¹⁷ While their works largely investigated the intricacies of Mexican slavery, their research questions were in dialogue with some of the issues of the comparative slavery school. A number of Mexican based scholars were drawn into this arena of research as well, but by and large, the strong tradition of regional history, which continues to be a prevalent feature of the Mexican academy today, generated a score of studies from the 1970s–1990s, which sought to examine the local contributions of blacks to regional society.¹⁸

The internationalization of scholarship on Afro-Mexico after the 1950s essentially helped establish a three-track system of research. On one track, a significant concentration of Mexican scholars have pursued the research path initially set forth by Aguirre Beltrán in seeking to understand how blackness fits into the larger, post-revolutionary national discourse of *mestizaje* (racial mixture). These studies have become quite sophisticated in their analysis over the years, postulating new visions of hybridity that push and test *mestizaje*. In making use of the literature on transculturation and syncretism, and by carefully periodizing the influences of black populations from the colonial period into modern times, this work is showing the spaces for the survival and transformation of African cultures. On another track, a significant number of international scholars (and some Mexicans) have examined the Mexican case to better understand processes of slavery,

freedom, and blackness, but within a broader global context. Lastly, the third track has seen both Mexican and international scholars working towards understanding the intricacies of Mexican colonial and nation-state hierarchies, and determining how blackness fits within such social organization schemes.

The past decade has witnessed a flurry of new research on all three tracks. More has transpired, however, than a steady increase in the volume of works. Some important shifts in conceptual approaches have taken place as well. Among the most notable have been the cultural and linguistic turns in historical analysis, prodding scholars to make deeper and richer use of records, such as Inquisition cases. As the foray into discourse analysis has ensued, new appreciations have emerged for the symbolic workings of power. Moreover, the themes of individual and collective agency, which have always been apparent in works on slave resistance, have reached new levels of sophistication. Scholars are paying closer attention to more everyday forms of agency, located not just in the struggle between masters and slaves, but between freedmen and bureaucrats, slaves and ecclesiastical authorities, men and women, and between the races themselves. Arguably, until recently, the topic of agency has not been as deeply embraced by scholars in Mexico as from elsewhere, since one of the critical implications of black agency is that black identities could have been fostered and nurtured at the expense of colonial and nationalist state-building enterprises. This perspective runs countercurrent to those who hold fast to the assimilationist narrative of Afro-Mexican history. Similarly, while both Mexican and international scholars have studied the intricacies of caste hierarchy, the caste vs. class debate has been seemingly less influential in the writings of scholars from Mexico. For many of them, the caste vs. class debate has a clearer resolution – class emerged as a more critical force towards shaping social relations than caste. Such a perspective supports the assimilationist narrative. Nevertheless, within Mexico, these research trends are beginning to change amongst those who specialize on Afro-Mexican topics. Furthermore, recent public debates on race held in Mexico during the spring and summer of 2005, surrounding the international controversies raised by the comments of President Vicente Fox,¹⁹ as well as Mexico's decision to release a stamp in the image of the comic book character Memín Penguin,²⁰ have shown new Mexican sensitivities to the topic of black identity. Within Mexico, there have even been movements by a limited number of Afro-Mexicans and politicians to press for the formal recognition of blacks as an ethnic group, so as to facilitate their acquisition of important communal rights.²¹ In this sense, a small segment of the Afro-Mexican community is engaging in the project of multi-cultural politics that has been sweeping Latin America since the 1980s.²² Meanwhile, in the academic realm, a number of Mexican scholars are mapping out research trajectories that include subaltern approaches, and the history of “mentalities,” along the lines of the French school of historical analysis. Additionally, Mexican scholars, who have always been seemingly more committed to fusing anthropological and sociological techniques into

their historical research than U.S. scholars, are developing and expanding the interdisciplinary nature of their work. In short, a range of new methodologies and questions mark a qualitative shift from previous demographically influenced and economic approaches to social history.²³ Of course, despite the changes, there still remain those in Mexico who cling strongly to the idea that care must be exercised when reifying blacks within scholarly and public discourse, since invoking “race” is analogous to inculcating racism.²⁴ But their opinions are being heavily challenged from within, as well as from without.

Current historical work on the Afro-Mexican experience appears to be headed in several directions. First, while slavery remains an important lens to study the black experience, increasingly, scholars are becoming interested in the lives of free-black populations. Some have taken an institutional approach, examining free-black participation in military and religious institutions.²⁵ Others are exploring the conceptual meaning of freedom, both for slaves and freedmen.²⁶ A few have made inquiries into black political participation in the 19th century.²⁷ However, black life in the 19th and 20th centuries remains an understudied topic in need of more research. On the other hand, religion and magic are themes of great importance to current and emerging studies, since these arenas offered power to Afro-Mexicans, especially in the colonial period.²⁸ Historians are also beginning to triangulate studies of blacks with greater precision, studying the interrelationships between Indians, Afro-Mexicans, and Spaniards.²⁹ Studies of caste relationships remain important, although some of the newer inquiries are starting to examine the origins of the system and its relationship to Spanish concepts of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) and citizenry (*vecindad*).³⁰ Work on regional history continues to increase both in sophistication, coverage, and thematic complexity. As the field continues to mature, what seems inevitable is greater convergence between internationally based scholars and those writing in Mexico. This convergence may begin to incorporate greater numbers of African scholars.³¹ Also, the African Diaspora and Black Atlantic research paradigms which have begun to take hold in the United States, will serve to help fashion some of the newer questions to be asked of the current generation of international scholars. Already some of those questions are appearing – what has been the process of Afro-Mexican ethnogenesis (as opposed to asking how Afro-Mexicans have facilitated Mexican *mestizaje*), how does the Mexican case improve our understanding of other Latin American colonies where the black population was far smaller than the indigenous population, and what are the mechanisms (cultural, social, political) that link Afro-Mexicans to the broader Atlantic world?

Notes

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* The author would like to thank Penn State's Africana Research Center for providing the funds to make the writing of this article possible.

¹ F. de Ajofrín, *Diario del viaje que hizo a la América en el siglo XVIII el padre fray Francisco de Ajofrín* (Mexico City, Instituto Cultural Hispano Mexicano, 1965); J. F. Gemelli Carreri, *Viaje a la Nueva España, México a fines del siglo XVII* (Mexico City, Ediciones Libro-Mex, 1995); T. Gage, *Nuevo reconocimiento de las Indias Occidentales* (Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982); A. von Humboldt, *Ensayo Político sobre el reino de la Nueva España*, trans. V. González Arnao, 4 vols. (Paris, 1822).

² The term *pardo* technically refers to the mixture of blacks and Indians, but by the 18th century, *pardo* was used as a synonym for "mulatto" in many circles.

³ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España, introducción y notas de Joaquín Ramírez Cabañas* (Mexico City, Editorial Porrúa, 1983), p. 421; B. Fra Molinero, "Ser mulato en España y América: discursos legales y otros discursos literarios" in *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos, derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos*, ed. B. A. Quejia and A. Stella (Seville, Spain, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 2001), p. 135; F. D. Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, ed. D. Heyden (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), pp. 510, 563; F. López de Gómara, *Cortés, the Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1964), pp. 204–5, 238, 397; A. N. Cabeza de Vaca, *La relación; o Naufragios* (Potomac, MD, Scripta Humanistica, 1986). For more see P. Gerhard, "A black Conquistador in Mexico," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 58 (3), 1978, pp. 451–9; M. Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in early Spanish America," *The Americas*, 57 (2), 2000, pp. 167–205.

⁴ Some examples include F. Seijas y Lobera, *Gobierno militar y político del reino imperial de la Nueva España*, ed. P. E. Pérez-Mallaína Bueno (Mexico City, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986); C. Sigüenza y Gongora, *Alboroto y motín de México del 8 de junio de 1692* (Mexico City, Talleres Gráficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, 1932). For more on the "plebeian" nature of Afro-Mexicans, see R. D. Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

⁵ V. Riva Palacio, M. Payno, J. A. Mateos and R. M. de la Torre, *El libro rojo* (Mexico City, Editorial Leyenda, 1946); V. Riva Palacio, *Los treinta y tres negros* (Mexico City, SEP-Conasupo, 1981). Note that good discussion on Palacio can be found in T. G. Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero: Mexico's First Black Indian President* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2001).

⁶ Good summary treatment of these points can be found in M. González Navarro, *Los Extranjeros en México y los Mexicanos en el extranjero, 1821–1970*, 3 vols. (Mexico City, COLMEX, 1994). For African-Americans crossing into Mexico, see B. Vinson III, *Flight: The Story of Virgil Richardson, A Tuskegee Airman in Mexico* (New York, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004); G. Horne, *Black and Brown: African-Americans and the Mexican Revolution* (New York, New York University Press, 2005); R. Schwartz, *Across the Rio to Freedom: U. S. Negroes in Mexico*, Southwestern Studies Monograph 44 (El Paso, Texas Western Press, 1975).

⁷ J. Vasconcelos, *La Raza Cósmica: Misión de la Raza Iberoamericana* (Barcelona, Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1958).

⁸ A. Toro, "Influencia de la raza negra en la formación del pueblo mexicano," *Ethnos. Revista para la vulgarización de Estudios Antropológicos sobre México y Centro América*, 1 (8–12), 1920–1, pp. 215–18.

⁹ G. Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México. Estudio etnohistórico* 3rd edn (Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989).

¹⁰ G. LaTorre, *Relaciones geográficas de Indias. (Contenidas en el Archivo General de Indias de Sevilla. La Hispanoamérica del siglo XVI). Virreinato de Nueva España (México. Censos de población)*, 4 (4), 1920; C. Basauri, *Breves notas etnográficas sobre la población negra del distrito de Jamiltepec, Oaxaca* (Mexico City, Consejo Editorial del Primer Congreso Demográfico, 1943); G. de la Peña, "Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán: Historia y Mestizaje" in *Historiadores de México en el Siglo XX*, ed. E. Florescano and R. P. Montfort (Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995), pp. 192–3.

¹¹ F. Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen. The Negro in the Americas* (New York, Vintage Books, 1946).

¹² G. Freyre, *Casa grande y senzala* (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1933); F. Ortiz, *Hampa afrocubana. Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)* (Madrid, Editorial América, 1917).

¹³ The literature on these regions is vast. However a sample of some of these works (books and edited volumes) include K. D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1998); A. de la Fuente, *A Nation For All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001); M. Restall (ed.), *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2005); B. Vinson III and S. R. King, "Introducing the 'new' African Diasporic military history in Latin America," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History (Special Issue)*, 5 (2), 2004; E. T. Gordon, *Disparate Diasporas: Identity and Politics in an African Nicaraguan Community* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1998); J. H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2003); R. Herrera, *Natives, Europeans, and Africans in Sixteenth-Century Santiago de Guatemala* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2003); C. Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor Among Lima's Slaves, 1800–1854* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994); J. Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999); P. Blanchard, *Slavery & Abolition in Early Republican Peru* (Wilmington, DE., Scholarly Resources, 1992); G. R. Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 2004); D. Howard, *Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic* (Boulder, CO., Lynne Rienner, 2001); R. E. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2001); W. R. Wright, *Café con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1990); E. Sagás, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2001); K. Lane, *Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2002); B. Ares Queija and A. Stella (eds), *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos: Derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos* (Seville, EEHA/CSIC, 2000); R. Cáceres, *Negros, mulatos, esclavos y libertos en la Costa Rica del siglo XVII* (Mexico City, Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 2000); M. E. Chaves, *María Chiquinquirá Díaz: Una esclava del siglo XVIII: Acerca de las identidades de amo y esclavo en el puerto colonial de Guayaquil* (Guayaquil, Archivo Histórico del Guayas, 1998); C. Aguirre, *Agentes de su propia libertad: Los esclavos de Lima y la desintegración de la esclavitud: 1821–1854* (Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 1993); J. M. de la Serna Herrera, *Pautas de convivencia étnica en la América Latina colonial (indios, negros, mulatos, pardos y esclavos)* (Mexico City, Universidad Autónoma de México, 2005).

¹⁴ F. P. Bowser, "The African in colonial Spanish America: Reflections on research achievements and priorities," *Latin American Research Review*, 7 (2), 1972, pp. 77–94. Note that efforts of synthesis have already started to take place, particularly in the form of edited collections and in some survey styled texts, such as: Andrews, *Afro-Latin America* and L. B. Rout (Jr.), *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day* (Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976). A few of the edited collections include: Restall, *Beyond Black and Red*; J. Landers, *Against the Odds: Free Blacks in the Slave Societies of the Americas* (London/Portland, Frank Cass, 1996); de la Serna Herrera, *Pautas de convivencia*; N. P. Naro, *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in 19th Century Latin America* (London, London Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 2003); Queija and Stella, *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos*; Landers, *Slave, Subjects and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, forthcoming); R. Cáceres, *Rutas de la esclavitud en África y América Latina* (Costa Rica, Universidad de Costa Rica, 2001).

¹⁵ Some important works amongst the extensive bibliography on the caste vs. class debate include: W. Borah and S. F. Cook "Sobre las posibilidades de hacer el estudio histórico del mestizaje sobre una base demográfica," *Revista de historia de América*, 53/54, 1962, pp. 181–90; P. Seed, "The social dimensions of race: Mexico City, 1753," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 62 (4), 1982, pp. 569–606; Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*; J. K. Chance and W. B. Taylor, "Estate and class in a colonial city, Oaxaca in 1792," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 19, 1977, pp. 454–87.

¹⁶ P. D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade, A Census* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

¹⁷ P. J. Carroll, "Estudio sociodemográfico de personas de sangre negra en Jalapa, 1791," *Historia Mexicana*, 23 (1), 1973, pp. 111–25; Carroll, "Mandinga: The evolution of a Mexican runaway slave Community, 1735–1827," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 19 (4), 1977, pp. 488–505; Carroll and A. de los Reyes, "Amapa, Oaxaca. Pueblo de cimarrones," *Boletín del Instituto*

Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 4, 1973, pp. 43–50; C. A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570–1650* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1976); P. Boyd-Bowman, “Negro slaves in early colonial México,” *The Americas*, 26 (2), 1969, pp. 134–51; E. F. Love, “Legal restrictions on Afro-Indian relations in colonial Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 4 (2), 1970, pp. 131–9; Love, “Marriage patterns of persons of African descent in a colonial Mexico City parish,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 51 (1), 1971, pp. 79–91; Love, “Negro resistance to Spanish Rule in colonial Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 52 (2), 1967, pp. 89–103; D. M. Davidson, “Negro slave control and resistance in colonial Mexico, 1519–1650,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 46 (3), 1966, pp. 235–53; R. LaDon Brady, “The domestic slave trade in sixteenth century México,” *The Americas*, 24 (3), 1968, pp. 281–9; W. H. Dusenberry, “Discriminatory aspects of legislation in colonial Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 33 (3), 1948, pp. 284–302.

¹⁸ Some examples include: F. Fernández Repetto and G. N. Sierra, *Una población perdida en la memoria: Los negros de Yucatán* (Merida, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1995); J. Andrade Torres, *El comercio de esclavos en la provincia de Tabasco (siglos XVI–XIX)* (Villahermosa, Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco, 1994); M. G. Chávez Carbajal, *Propietarios y esclavos negros en Michoacán (1600–1650)* (Morelia, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 1994); R. Valdez Aguilar, *Sinaola: Negritud y Olvido* (Culiacán, Talleres Gráficos El Diario de Sinaloa, 1993); M. L. Gálvez Jiménez, *Celaya: Sus raíces africanas* (Guanajuato, Ediciones la Rana, 1995). See also several regional articles in L. M. Martínez Montiel and J. C. Reyes (eds), *Memoria del III Encuentro Nacional de Afromexicanistas* (Colima, Gobierno del Estado de Colima y Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1993); A. Naveda Chávez-Hita (ed.), *Pardos, mulatos y libertos, Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* (Xalapa, Universidad Veracruzana, 2001); L. M. Martínez Montiel (ed.), *Presencia africana en México* (Mexico City, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994).

¹⁹ President Fox was widely criticized when he made a public statement to the effect that Mexican immigrants to the United States take jobs “that not even blacks want to do.” See: “Mexican leader criticized for comment on Blacks,” *CNN.com*, May 15, 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/05/14/fox.jackson/>.

²⁰ Memín Penguin, a traditional Mexican comic book character originally produced in the 1940s, has been compared in international circles to offensive stereotyped caricatures such as “little black sambo,” among others. In Mexico, the comic book character represents a positive national icon for many. Although much has been written on this in newspapers and on the Internet, see B. Vinson III, “How Memín sparks race-relation talks between U.S., Mexico,” *Centre Daily Times (State College)*, July 25, 2005, p. A6.

²¹ L. Castellanos, “Buscan volver etnia a los afromexicanos,” *Reforma* (Mexico City), June 8, 2005, p. 3C.

²² J. Hooker, “Indigenous inclusion/Black exclusion: Race, ethnicity and multicultural citizenship in Latin America,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 37 (2), 2005, pp. 285–310.

²³ See the historiographical essays in the edited volume compiled by M. E. Velázquez and E. Correa, *Poblaciones y culturas de origen africano en México* (Mexico City, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2005), especially the essays in pp. 65–141.

²⁴ This idea, found in many parts of Central America, is surveyed well by Q. Duncan, “Existen las razas?” in *Poblaciones y culturas de origen africano en México*, ed. Velázquez and, pp. 217–25.

²⁵ B. Vinson III, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001); N. von Germeten, “Corporate salvation in a colonial society: Confraternities and social mobility for Africans and their descendants in New Spain,” PhD dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2003). Note that Juan Manuel de la Serna is also increasingly dedicating himself to the study of free-black soldiers in the militia units of Veracruz (los Lanceros de Veracruz).

²⁶ F. Proctor III, “Slavery, identity, and culture: An Afro-Mexican counterpoint, 1640–1763,” PhD dissertation (Emory University, 2003). H. L. Bennett is also working on the theme of freedom as a complementary work to his *Africans in Colonial Mexico. Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570–1640* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003).

²⁷ Vincent, *Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*.

²⁸ J. C. Bristol, “Negotiating authority in New Spain: Blacks, mulattos, and religious practice in seventeenth century Mexico,” PhD Dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 2001); J. Villa-Flores, “‘To lose one’s soul’: Blasphemy and slavery in New Spain, 1596–1669,” *Hispanic American Historical*

Review, 82 (3), 2002, pp. 435–69; L. A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham/London, Duke University Press, 2003).

²⁹ Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*; M. Restall, *The Black Middle* (forthcoming manuscript with Stanford University Press).

³⁰ M. E. Martínez is currently working on these issues. See her dissertation, “The Spanish concept of *Limpieza de Sangre* and the emergence of the ‘race/caste’ system in the viceroyalty of New Spain,” PhD dissertation (University of Chicago, 2002).

³¹ Africanist P. T. Zeleza has recently called for greater integration and plans to include Afro-Mexico (and other Latin American cases) in his forthcoming work on the African Diaspora. For his preliminary ideas on the topic, see “Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the black Atlantic,” *African Affairs*, 104 (414), 2005, pp. 35–68. In Mexico, M. E. Velázquez has been calling for greater conversation between Afro-Mexicanists and Africanists. One important work that appears to bridge the divide is N. Ngou-Mve, *El África bantú en la colonización de México (1595–1640)* (Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas–Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1994).

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